

**Claims:**

1. A method for encoding in the filename of a signed file, an address from which the certificate required to authenticate said signed file can be accessed, said method comprising the steps of,

- encoding said address from which the certificate required to authenticate said signed file can be accessed (step 110);

- merging said filename and said encoded address in a new filename (step 115); and,

- renaming said signed file with said new filename (step 120),

wherein said filename and said encoded addresses are separated by a control character.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of encoding the address from which the certificate required to authenticate said signed file can be accessed comprises the steps of :

- analyzing the address from which the certificate required to authenticate said signed file can be accessed to detect predetermined characters (step 135); and,

- replacing said predetermined characters by associated characters (step 140),

said predetermined and associated characters being stored in a lexicography table (145).

3. The method of either claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the encoded address is merged with said filename, by inserting

the encoded address in front of the extension dot of said filename.

4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3 further comprising a compression step to reduce the size of the encoded address.

5. A method for authenticating a signed file having a filename wherein an address from which the certificate required to authenticate this signed file can be accessed is encoded, said method comprising the steps of,

- 10     - extracting said encoded address;
- decoding said encoded address (step 225);
- accessing said certificate required to authenticate said signed file using said decoded address (steps 230 and 235),
- 15     - authenticating said signed file using said accessed certificate (steps 240 to 255).

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of checking said certificate before authenticating said signed file.

- 20     7. The method of either claim 5 or claim 6 wherein said step of accessing said certificate required to authenticate said signed file further comprises the step of,
  - downloading an authentication function according to information contained in said certificate.

8. The method of any one of claims 5 to 7 wherein said step of authenticating said signed file comprises at least one of the steps consisting in checking the integrity of said signed file and in verifying the signature.

5 9. The method of any one of claims 5 to 8 further comprising the step of extracting a public key from said certificate, said public key being used to authenticate said signed file.

10 10. The method of any one of claims 1 to 9 wherein said certificate is stored in a server of an authentication authority.

11. An apparatus comprising means adapted for carrying out each step of the method according to any one of the claims 1 to 10.

15 12. A computer-like readable medium comprising instructions for carrying out each step of the method according to any one of the claims 1 to 10.